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ABSTRACT

This thesis presents an examination of the currently most promising approaches to reading instruction in English as a second language (ESL). It looks at the factors which make the ESL teacher more effective and suggests ways these important factors can be used in instruction. The study is based on a review of the literature and interviews with and observation of experts in the field. The literature revealed a strong emphasis on the psycholinguistic approach to reading, which stresses a thorough understanding on the teacher's part of the reading process, and entails an appreciation of the cultural, linguistic, and rhetorical differences between the student's native language and culture and the American language and culture. It is concluded that ESL teacher training should include a course on reading instruction with this approach, and that ESL reading materials designers should use this approach. Further study is recommended to apply the approach to such classroom issues as grouping students by learning goals, targeting specific cultural groups, and accommodating age groups. Wider dissemination of information to teachers and administrators about the psycholinguistic approach to ESL is also recommended. (MSE)

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EFFECTIVE TEACHING OF ESL READING

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

BY

ANN ARONSON MARTIN

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CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

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Dr. Margaret Policastro's enthusiasm for the teaching of reading and her boundless energy was my introduction to the field of reading. She made the importance of teaching reading come alive for me and helped me to see how I could adapt what she covered in class to both my foreign language teaching and my ESL training.

Many thanks to Mrs. Carrie Dobbs and Mrs. Joanna Escobar for their interest in me and my work. They offered me much pertinent resource material. In addition, the interviews I had with them were very informative and useful. In the teaching of ESL reading, as in any area of education, personal experience in the field helps to add a realistic, up-to-date understanding of the topic.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

The field of teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) reading, which is the focus of this paper, reflects the shortcomings of the field of the teaching of reading in general. In addition, the difficulties are compounded by the added factors of linguistic and cultural differences between the learners and the native users of the target language.

Being able to read is the basic mark of an educated person. Therefore, the primary task of educational professionals is to lead students to read in the most effective way. Unfortunately, for too long the teaching of ESL reading has been an area of unexamined assumptions about reading that have led to failure in many places. In the literature there are many differences of opinion on approaches to teaching reading and little has been written about these approaches for the teacher of ESL reading. An informal survey of Chicago area universities reveals that ESL teacher training in reading has been sadly neglected, often left out entirely from programs which purport to prepare teachers for the ESL classroom.[1]

Because of this neglect, it is not uncommon for a teacher of ESL reading who has been through a typical

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[1]The University of Illinois/Chicago, Northeastern University and Roosevelt University do not require their ESL teacher trainees to complete a class in the teaching of reading.

training program to ask students to read a passage or a story, test their "comprehension" with a set of who, what, where, when, and how questions, and consider his obligation to teach reading as having been fulfilled. The complexity of the reading process and what is involved in genuine reading comprehension is, in this activity, ignored by, or perhaps, unknown to the ESL teacher. Although the questions asked may be called comprehension questions, the answers do not demonstrate whether a student has understood what he has read. They may be supplied by merely repeating the text, verbatim. What is preferable is a set of questions which requires the student to synthesize the material he has read and to make inferences. For example, do you think Mrs. Smith is rich? and Why? are questions which force the student to demonstrate comprehension of what he has read and to be able to sift out the information necessary to answer the question.

Significance of the Problem

Illustrating the general shortcomings of the teaching of reading is the fact that many native English speakers complete twelve years of schooling without being able to read well. Furthermore, students of minority groups, who are taught by traditional methods used for native speakers, such as American Indians, Hispanic-Americans, and Appalachian whites are dropping out of school in large numbers. In relation to the teaching of ESL reading the influx of immigrants and refugees of all ages to our shores puts added

pressure on an already faltering educational system. In addition, many students come to us from overseas each year, in increasing numbers, to be educated at our institutions of higher learning. Before they can begin their studies, however, they must often learn the language. These young people will return to their home countries to be viewed not only as experts in their chosen fields, but also as experts in American culture. We must be sure that they are carefully taught so that their experiences will be as positive and informed as possible.

Clearly an improved approach to the teaching of reading is of vital importance not only to the individuals involved, but to American Society as a whole.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The teaching of reading to non-native speakers of English is a discreet field, even though much of its theoretical basis and practices has been supplied from work done in the teaching of reading to native English speakers. The following review, therefore, includes work done in the area of teaching of native English speakers.

Approaches to Reading

The teaching of reading is often divided into two types of approaches: the "decoding" or phonics approach and more meaning-oriented approaches such as the Learning Experience Approach. The former involves looking at a word (the code) and attempting to break it. This code-breaking procedure is referred to as phonics. Phonics can be synthetic or analytic; synthetic phonics involves starting with the sounds and blending them. For example the teacher would break down the word CAT into /k/, /ae/, and /t/ and would teach the pronunciation of each and then the student would blend to /kaet/. The same word decoded in the analytic manner would begin with the word /kaet/ and from it, the student would be expected to produce the sound of the word. The teacher might use minimal pairs--/baet/, /maet/, /saet/, /faet/ and others to achieve this. Thus, the student is expected to be able to learn to recognize the /aet/ sound in /kaet/. The analytic phonetic

approach is also referred to as the whole-word approach. The Headway Program[2] and Mastery Reading Storybook I[3] are examples of materials which reflect the "decoding" or "phonics" approach to teaching reading to young native speakers of English.

The phonics approach does not emphasize meaning, which is referred to in the literature as comprehension. It assumes that if a student achieves sight recognition of a word or is able to reproduce the sounds in the word, he will be able to retrieve meaning from the passage. According to Gudschinsky, some of the exponents of the phonetic approach to reading are Weaver, Kingston, E. Brown, and Gough.[4]

While the phonics approach to the teaching of reading starts with sounds and ends with meaning, the Language Experience Approach, (hereafter LEA), starts with meaning; namely, the actual experience of the reader.[5] The basis for LEA and other meaning-oriented methodologies in ESL reading is found in recent work in psycholinguistics as it relates to the teaching of reading.

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[2]The Headway Program (LaSalle, IL: Open Court Publishing Company, 1979).

[3]Mastery Reading Storybook I (Chicago, IL: Distar Publishing Company (S.R.A.), 1983).

[4]Sarah Gudschinsky, Literacy: The Growing Influence of Linguistics (The Hague: Mouton, 1979), p. 19.

[5]John Haskell, "Teaching Beginning Reading in ESL, Bilingual and Adult Literacy Classes Through Language Experience," ESL Literacy Handout, distributed by The Statewide ESL/Adult Education Service Center, Arlington Heights, IL, September 10-12, 1979.

What is the Psycholinguistic Approach to Reading?

Strongly opposed to phonetic approaches as the sole path to reading is the psycholinguistic approach. From this point of view, reading is defined as ". . . a psycholinguistic process by which the reader, a language user, reconstructs, as best he can, a message which has been encoded by a writer as a graphic display,"[6] and ". . . making sense of written language rather than of decoding print to sound."[7] Other characterizations of reading offered by people in the field are "reading is active," "reading is building bridges between new information and known information," and "reading is reasoning."[8]

Much is heard about the psycholinguistic approach in reading circles today. It is used in books on reading, by teachers of reading, and by researchers whose purpose is to explain what reading is, and what happens when we read. Most of the reading professionals who view reading from a psycholinguistic point of view believe that reading is a process that is "closely interrelated with thinking and learning processes; a process requiring that a series of complex

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[6]James Coady, "A Psycholinguistic Model of the ESL Reader," Reading in a Second Language (Massachusetts: Newbury House Publishers, Inc., 1979), p. 5.

[7]Frank Smith, Understanding Reading (New York: CBS College Publishing, 1982), p. 2.

[8]Policastro Lectures, Roosevelt University, Arlington Heights, IL, fall, 1981.

responses occur at exactly the right instants in order to interpret symbols on the printed page."[9] The psycholinguistic approach to the teaching of reading is a way of looking at the reading process from the perspective of both psychology and linguistics. As Gudschinsky points out, some of those who espouse the psycholinguistic approach to reading are K. L. Goodman, Y. M. Goodman, F. Smith, Kolers, Ryan, Holmes, Ruddell, Calfee, and Shankweller.[10]

Although Robert Lado was not known as a psycholinguist, in the 1950's he pioneered in insisting that effective language teaching must be based upon the contrastive analysis of not only the student's native language and the target language, but also the cultures involved. Of course, his contrasts were between what are today called "surface structures" rather than "deep structures."[11] However, the emphasis Lado put on the importance of understanding the cultural differences is a clear indication of his own intuitive

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[9]Frank Smith, ed., Psycholinguistics and Reading (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1973), p. vii.

[10]Gudschinsky, Literacy, p. 19.

[11]John F. Savage, ed., Linguistics for Teachers (Chicago: Science Research Associates, Inc., 1973), pp. xvi and xix.

"Surface structure" is the objective language data which is perceived orally or visually. "Deep structure" is the hypothesized structure underlying the surface structure which is derived from the deep structure by means of transformation. Both terms are the products of transformational-generative grammar.

feelings and the restraints put on his work by the fashionable framework for linguistics studies at that time.[12]

The field of psycholinguistics began to develop in the 1950's and 1960's, although Sapir in 1949[13] wrote about the psychological reality of linguistic units and the psychological patterning of language. Pike also focused on native reaction and psychological reality in linguistics.[14] The early development of psycholinguistics did not relate directly to the teaching of reading, but focused rather, on language acquisition, speech perception, and bilingualism which are fundamental to some of the more recent developments in psycholinguistics applied to reading and writing. Miller, in 1954,[15] was one of the well-known early psychologists to study language.

A major contribution of the psycholinguistic approach, and most certainly, the most pertinent for my purposes, is the development of a viable model of the reading process. This model, however its specific form may vary in the litera-

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[12]Robert Lado, Linguistics Across Cultures (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1957).

[13]Edward Sapir, Language (USA: Harcourt Brace and World, Inc., 1949), p. 9.

[14]Kenneth L. Pike, Language in Relation to a Unified Theory of Human Behavior (Glendale, California: Summer Institute of Linguistics, Part I, 1954, Part II, 1955, Part III, 1960).

[15]George A. Miller, "Psycholinguistics," Handbook of Social Psychology, ed. Gardner Lindzey (Cambridge: Addison-Wesley, 1954), pp. 693-708.

ture, emphasizes an understanding of how students learn to read in a second language.[16]

Smith, in Understanding Reading,[17] says that first, in order to understand reading, we must accept the fact that many questions remain unanswered, that there is no place for dogmatism about reading or learning to read. Secondly, he says that we must analyze the reading process as carefully as possible, examine all aspects of this many-faceted activity, and develop at least an idea of what is involved.

Also necessary for an understanding of reading, states Smith, is an acquaintance with research in several disciplines, such as language, learning theory, the development of spoken language ability, and the physiology of the eye and brain.[18] Such an acquaintance, in turn, would help the teacher to understand the reading process, and, according to the psycholinguistic viewpoint of reading, ultimately, to the teacher of reading being able to help students to learn to read. The central task of psycholinguistics is to describe the psychological processes that take place when people use language.[19]

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[16]Gudschinsky, Literacy, p. 18.

[17]Smith, Understanding Reading, passim.

[18]Smith, Understanding Reading, p. x.

[19]Frank Smith and Kenneth S. Goodman, "On the Psycholinguistic Method of Teaching Reading," Psycholinguistics and Reading, p. 178.

Claimed Benefits of the Psycholinguistic Approach to Reading

Those who espouse the psycholinguistic approach to reading do so because they believe that it seeks a deep, thorough understanding of the student and the reading process, which in turn affords the teacher of reading to non-natives the knowledge which is necessary to guide students toward successful reading. This view is seen by its exponents as a much needed alternative to one which would lock educators into a rigid prescription of "do's" and "don'ts," which would preclude attention to individual needs and learning styles.

The psycholinguistic approach to reading allows teachers to "tune in" to their students' individual needs and backgrounds, enabling teachers to be successful in their task. In Chapter IV I will discuss how critically important the teacher's understanding of cultural and linguistic differences among students is, and how these differences affect one's ability to read.

The benefits of the psycholinguistic approach to reading, its supporters believe, lie in the emphasis on flexibility of techniques employed and the individualized nature of such an approach. Therefore, what Goodman, Goodman, Smith, et. al. are attempting throughout their books to communicate to teachers is that the psycholinguistic approach to ESL reading purports to achieve an in-depth understanding of the reading process. Based on reading and personal experience, I agree with this point of view.

CHAPTER III

PURPOSE AND METHOD OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this paper is 1) to examine the currently more prominent approaches to the teaching of reading with specific reference to non-native speakers of English; 2) to reveal what the important factors are that can make the teaching of ESL reading teacher more effective; and 3) to suggest ways that these important factors can be used in teaching. My aim is to assemble and present such information from the perspective of a language teacher in order to help other teachers of ESL reading to better understand the reading process and thus be more effective teachers.

My method was to concentrate on materials which focused on the psycholinguistic view of reading. In preparing to write this paper I read primary sources in the teaching of reading, interviewed practicing experts in the field and observed their classes. I interviewed at length Mrs. Carrie Dobbs, full-time ESL instructor at Harper Community College; Dr. Margaret Policastro, assistant professor of education who teaches reading and trains reading teachers at Roosevelt University; and Mrs. Joanna Escobar, experienced ESL teacher and Assistant Director of Statewide ESL/Adult Education Service Center-Illinois. These interviews helped me to further comprehend what an awesome, many-faceted task we face in teaching ESL reading. These individuals, all of whom have a great deal of practical experience in the field, also helped

me to clarify my understanding of both the field of reading and specifically, ESL reading. Much of what I had read was reinforced during the interviews.

I also had the opportunity to observe Mrs. Dobbs in the classroom. Each of the two classes I visited was 90 minutes in length. They were intensive ESL classes for students who intend to pursue a college career in the United States. The classes were comprised of 8-10 students in their late twenties, of various culture groups. There were a few Hispanics, several Koreans, and a Pole. By visiting these ESL classes at Harper Community College I was able to observe an experienced ESL teacher as she helped students to learn to read English.

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

The psycholinguistic approach to the task of teaching reading to non-native speakers is the most effective because it deals with what the non-native learner brings to his reading. Therefore, as the reading process is indeed closely interrelated with thinking and learning processes, it is mandatory that we teachers be able to assess our students' capacity for extracting meaning from text, a task which involves all three processes.

An accurate assessment of second language readers requires that the teacher has a knowledge of the cultural and linguistic interferences which block the student's way to successful reading. Since the non-native English speaker's handicap is associated with his cultural and linguistic background, the teacher's task should be clear.[20] He must make himself aware of this background and capitalize on his knowledge of it to structure a beneficial reading program for his students. If the teacher should fail to do so, he will be skirting the real issue and employing hit or miss tactics in the classroom.

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[20]Carolyn Williams Ebel, "An Examination of Theory and Practice in Teaching Reading to Limited English Speakers in the Elementary Grades" (Ph.D. dissertation, Temple University, 1978), p. 48.

Reading and learning are meaningful activities--purposeful and rational--dependent on the prior knowledge and expectations of the reader.[21] Prior knowledge is what the learner brings with him from his cultural background and experiences. Just as an alert inner city child learning to read English might have a great deal of difficulty "understanding" or "comprehending" a passage about middle-class suburbia with tree-lined streets, two-car garages, car pools and summer camp, so might a native Argentinian from Buenos Aires who has spent his twenty years in a middle-class "barrio" and whose family has a live-in maid, become confused and unable to "comprehend" material about the American Old West. Neither of these students is "stupid" or "retarded." However, the likelihood of either one experiencing success in reading English is slim if the teacher is unconcerned or uninformed about the individual backgrounds of these students.

Many people believe that reading is understanding the written word, but within the framework of the psycholinguistic model of reading, reading is bringing meaning to the written word. No matter what the author had in mind when writing the text, the reader will come away with ideas which correspond to his personal experience and background. John A. Upshur produced a model which is a statement of the psycholinguistic approach to language learning and use in general and thus to the reading process. Although his comments are

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[21]Smith and Goodman, Psycholinguistics and Reading, p. 178.

directed to oral communication, we can apply them to reading, or written communication. Upshur, writing about the components of oral communication, states that equally as important as the written word is audience meaning--the meaning which the reader brings to the material.[22]

Frederick J. Bosco, in "The Relevance of Recent Psycholinguistic Studies to TESOL,"[23] makes another statement about reading from the psycholinguistic point of view. In reference to teaching language, Bosco's model includes instruction in the language and orientation to cultural patterns. Within the framework of this model, he says it is important that the ESL teacher understand what the speaker (or the reader) considers to be important; in other words, Bosco suggests that the teacher's instruction be based upon an in-depth examination of the social, cultural, and historical aspects of the reader's life.

Mrs. Dobbs' methods and discussion techniques reflected a strong influence by the psycholinguistic approach to teaching reading. The teacher led a pre-reading discussion on the topic of "drinking," which was to be the subject of the reading selection for that particular day. Many attitudes and

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[22]John A. Upshur, "Measurement of Oral Communication," Teaching English As a Second Language (New York: McGraw Hill International Book Co., 1972), pp. 326-327.

[23]Frederick J. Bosco, "The Relevance of Recent Psycholinguistic Studies to TESOL," Teaching English As a Second Language (New York: McGraw Hill International Book Co., 1972), p. 371.

customs were brought up during the discussion, in which students were encouraged to offer opinions and experiences. The main goal of the teacher was to familiarize her students with the topic of "drinking" in American culture. This technique proved to be very effective, for many of the situations within the reading had been discussed in the classroom. Thus, the reading teacher was providing her students with background knowledge on the subject so that they could enter the reading activity and be able to "comprehend" the essay they were to read. Follow-up exercises and a re-reading of the essay took place during the same class period. Mrs. Dobbs told me that this method has been very successful for her; the students seem to be motivated to read after an informal discussion in which they provided input. I, too, feel this is an effective method. The students' sharing of experiences and opinions adds a dimension which aids their comprehension of the material.

In spite of the fact that both the disadvantaged native speaker and the culturally "foreign" non-native speaker share a lack of familiarity with the underlying cultural assumptions of the author, there are additional cultural differences between them which the teacher must recognize and be prepared to deal with.

One such difference is that languages express their cultural thought patterns in a variety of ways. For example, students from Europe, Asia, Latin America, the Middle East, and Africa have all learned to organize and express their

thoughts according to certain cultural patterns.[24] It is crucial that teachers lead students of English as a second language to an understanding of how the English speaker usually thinks and how English thought patterns differ from their own. Without this undertanding ESL students may never truly comprehend what they read; thus, their path to reading English will be exceedingly rough and frustrating, and consequently, probably unsuccessful.

Robert B. Kaplan of the University of Southern California studied cultural thought patterns of various peoples. He provided as an example the observation that English-speaking people typically present their ideas using the following methods of organization: definition, cause and effect, comparison, contrast, chronology, and space order. Kaplan then compared and contrasted the patterns of English with those of other cultures to impress upon the teacher the necessity of his being aware of these differences in order to appreciate how important English language patterns are to the ESL student of reading and writing.[25] Kaplan says that the teaching of reading and composition to foreign students does differ from the teaching of the same skills to American students and that rhetorical cultural differences supply the key to the difference in teaching approach. He quotes Robert Oliver:

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[24]Robert B. Kaplan, "Cultural Thought Patterns in Inter-Cultural Education," Language Learning, 16 (1966): 4.

[25]Ibid., pp. 10-18.

> . . . Rhetoric is concerned with factors of analysis, data gathering, interpretation, and synthesis. . . What we notice in the environment and how we notice it are both pre-determined to a significant degree by how we are prepared to notice this particular type of object. . . Cultural anthropologists point out that given acts and objects appear vastly different in different cultures, depending on the values attached to them. Psychologists investigating perception are increasingly insistent that what is preceived depends upon the observer's perceptual frame of reference.[26]

Just as culture is not universal, neither are rhetorical patterns. They evolve out of a culture. In order to communicate with students, teachers must understand that rhetoric varies from culture to culture. What are the characteristics of an expository paragraph written in English? Basically, the "thought patterns which speakers and readers of English appear to expect as an integral part of their communication is a sequence that is dominantly linear in its development."[27] The most common type of English paragraph generally begins with a topic sentence and is followed by a series of sub-divisions of that topic statement, each supported by examples and illustrations which provide the development of the central idea. The paragraph then concludes with a sentence that points out how that idea is related to other ideas, to prove or to argue something.

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[26]Ibid., p. 5.

[27]Robert T. Oliver, "Foreword," Philosophy, Rhetoric and Argumentation, eds. Maurice Nathanson and Henry W. Johnstone, Jr., (University Park, PA, 1965), pp. x-xi, quoted in Kaplan, "Cultural Thought Patterns," p. 8.

The second most common type of English paragraph contains the same elements but in reverse order. Examples and illustrations are compiled to lead to the main idea which is stated in the final sentence of the paragraph. In addition, two highly valued components of rhetorical style are unity and coherence. "Unity is the quality attributed to writing which has all its necessary and sufficient parts. Coherence is the quality attributed to the presentation of material in a sequence which is intelligible to its reader."[28]

Let us look now at how other cultures' traditional thought patterns are expressed in print. In Arabic (and in most other Semitic languages) paragraph or thought development is based on a complex series of parallel constructions, both positive and negative. This type of parallelism can be demonstrated in English by referring to the King James Version of the Old Testament, which of course, was originally written in Hebrew, a semitic language:

1) His descendents will be mighty in the land and the generation of the upright will be blessed.

2) Because he inclined his ear to me therefore I will call on him as long as I live.[29]

Another cultural pattern is that of some Oriental writing, specifically Chinese and Korean. This writing is

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[28]Kaplan, "Cultural Thought Patterns," p. 8.

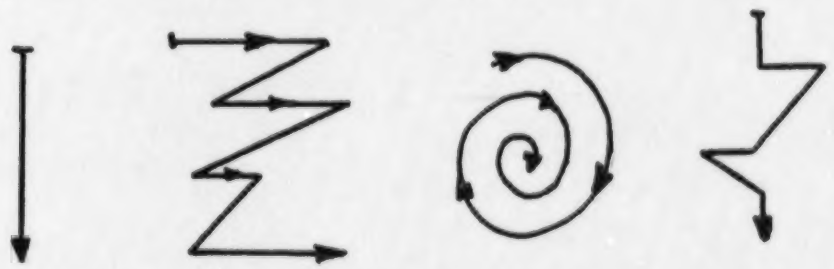
[29]Ibid., p. 10.

marked by what Kaplan calls "an approach to indirection";[30] the development of the paragraph turns and turns in a widening spiral around the subject, but the subject is never spelled out directly. As the essays in Kaplan's article illustrate, things are developed in terms of what they are not, rather than in terms of what they are.

In Spanish and French paragraph writing (both Romance languages), the salient characteristic is digression from the subject. The subject is declared, but as the paragraph develops, the writer goes away from and returns to the subject at will.

Kaplan describes the above-mentioned cultural patterns graphically:

English Semitic Oriental Romance



[31]

The discussion of cultural thought patterns expressed in expository prose is pertinent for the ESL reading teacher who must be aware of these differences and must make these differences apparent to his students. The differences can be focused upon through 1) the presentation of selected examples

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[30]Ibid., p. 13.

[31]Ibid., p. 17.

of writing, 2) video-taped social encounters where interaction is observed, 3) the staging of cross cultural encounters, or 4) problem-solving activities.

The techniques pointed out above could be very useful to the conscientious ESL reading teacher in illustrating the cultural differences which are involved. Such contrastive juxtaposing is also advocated by many language teaching experts such as Lado and Thonis for the teaching of other linguistic components such as grammars, sound systems, and vocabularies.

A second cultural difference which the teacher must recognize and be able to deal with is the background knowledge and experience of the student. Smith and others concur that reading includes what the reader brings to the text. Thus, a reader can get <u>out</u> of the text only what he brings <u>to</u> it; that is, his experience, his background knowledge. Unless he has had some comparable experience or received background knowledge on a subject, an ESL reader will lack the capacity to get accurate meaning from the written word. Johnson says ". . . more information is contributed by the reader than by the print on the page . . . . readers understand what they read because they are able to take the stimulus beyond its graphic representation to an appropriate group of concepts already stored in their memories."[32] Johnson did a study on the effects on reading comprehension of building background

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[32]Patricia Johnson, "Effects on Reading Comprehension of Building Background Knowledge," <u>TESOL Quarterly</u> 4 (December 1982): 505.

knowledge and she found that prior experience in the American culture seemed to affect ESL students' comprehension of a passage on the topic of an American custom, Halloween.

Based on her belief that ". . . words translated from the vernacular to English may not carry identical meanings even though they appear to do so. . .,"[33] Eleanor Thonis points out how words are culturally determined; that is, their meaning is. Following is an analysis of the idea of the panadero/bread man for contemporary speakers of the languages:

"Breadman" - U.S.	"Panadero" - Latin America
1. delivery man arrives in a truck	1. arrives on bicycle or on foot
2. brings wrapped, sliced bread	2. carries basket of crusty, rough-textured bread
3. makes delivery to grocery store	3. announced with a song, bell, whistle
	4. may make delivery to "empleada" of the household early in a.m.
	5. in large villages/cities arrives in small truck--blows horn[34]

Thus we see how culturally defined objects or events learned in one context, will influence the understanding of those objects or events even though they are differently

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[33]Eleanor W. Thonis, Teaching Reading to Non-English Speakers (New York: Collier Macmillan International, Inc., 1978), p. 103.

[34]Ibid.

understood by the member of a different culture. The more "real" experiences we can provide our ESL students with, the likelier it is that they will more readily comprehend reading about American customs. If the student has not experienced given events as defined by the culture, the ESL teacher must present them in the classroom.

Earlier in the paper I stated that interferences to successful reading are linguistic as well as cultural in nature. Although I have alluded to these language-related factors when discussing the concept of cultural thought patterns, until now I have not elaborated upon them. I have now reached the point in this thesis where I will elaborate upon my earlier allusions to the fact that interferences to successful writing are linguistic as well as cultural in nature. Although most reading experts agree that practice reading is what forms the reading habit, they also agree that without certain preliminary skills, ESL reading would be an exercise in futility. Ronald Mackay emphasizes this point in "Teaching the Information-Gathering Skills" in Reading in a Second Language.[35]

Since chronology provides one basic method of organization, I will begin with it. A teacher of English as a second language must introduce his students to certain vocabulary items and they, in turn, must learn to identify them in

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[35]Ronald, Mackay, "Teaching the Information-Gathering Skills," Reading in a Second Language, eds. Ronald Mackay, Bruce Barkman, and R. R. Jordan, (Massachussetts: Newbury House, 1979), pp. 80-81.

order to understand the organization of the reading passage. Some of these useful words and expressions are:

now, nowadays
when
before, after, while, during
later, earlier, formerly
former, latter
in the first place, in the second place; to begin with
next, then, subsequently, in the next place
at last, in conclusion, finally[36]

There are various ways that an ESL teacher can reinforce the concept of chronology. He might ask the student to organize into chronological order a series of statements of information; or to combine into one sentence pairs of sentences connected by the subordinating conjunctions "after," "while," and "before" or other time-oriented conjunctions. Another technique is to ask the student to make a chronological chart of the events in a passage and to write questions of chronological order such as, What happened after _____?. By teaching this skill and others I will mention, the teacher of English as a second language prepares his students to get meaning from print.

The following words and expressions are a sampling of the necessary vocabulary for prediction which should be presented to students of English as a second language to help them to be able to predict as both readers and writers.

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[36]Mary S. Lawrence, Writing as a Thinking Process (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1976), pp. 43-44.

predict (that)
infer (that)
future (adj.)
in the future
foretell
forecast
the future implications of_____

most likely consequences
the next step
the end result
likely (adj.)
plan (noun)
the future will bring ____
It is likely (predictable) that[37]

The teacher of ESL reading might take the time to guide students to understand how structural patterns determine which form of a particular word should be used. For example, should one use the word "future" as an adjective or as a noun? The degree of certainty helps to determine the appropriate meaning of a word. Whether the outcome of a given situation is likely, predictable, or probable is a rhetorical device that students must be taught in order to increase their chances of being successful readers.

Another rhetorical device, often linked with chronology, but not to be taught as synonymous, is cause and effect. The vocabulary given above for practicing prediction is also intended for teaching cause and effect. Additional vocabulary for this method of logical organization follows:

so
thus
therefore
accordingly
since
if _____ is true, then _____ follows
_____; therefore _____
_____; consequently _____
_____; causes _____[38]

because (of)
owing to
due to
as a result

[37]Ibid., p. 154.

[38]Ibid., p. 116.

There are many ways to reinforce the cause and effect device in the ESL reading classroom. The teacher can offer pairs of sentences which the students must identify as examples of either cause and effect or chronological order. Or, he might read a passage of not too difficult material while the students listen. Then the students can be asked to write two or three statements of cause and effect which are true according to the data. This whole activity is not recommended for frequent use, since reading outloud involves proficiency in another skill area and can distract from the emphasis on reading.

Though two devices, comparison and contrast may be dealt with as one because they are so closely related. Some pertinent vocabulary to help the ESL student determine whether the author intends to compare or contrast are:

To compare:	similar to like, alike the same as just as in the same way to have in common as
To contrast:	however otherwise nevertheless different from less than more than faster than on the other hand although in contrast (to) unlike[39]

[39]Ibid., pp. 81-82.

Another aspect of comparison and contrast is the use of the "-er" and "more" with an adjective or adverb to form the comparison in English. Students of ESL reading must be able to recognize forms such as "happier," "sadder," and "more beautiful" in order to comprehend comparison. To practice the concept of contrast, the teacher could ask students to complete questions using the patterns such as: "How is _____ different from _____? In what ways do _____ and _____ differ? What is the difference between _____ and _____?" And for practice in comparison, the teacher might ask students to compare their classmates. For example: "Pedro is as _____ as Juan; Maria is not as _____ as the teacher." From my experience as a language teacher students tend to catch on to a new concept faster if they can readily relate to it. The best way to introduce new learning is to relate it to students' previous experiences.

For the teaching of all these skills, the teacher must use material which is easily comprehended by the student and is of high interest level to him. Otherwise, the exercises would be unproductive. The goal of the teacher of ESL is to help his students to acquire the skills, based on their experience and their needs, to become readers of English. Understanding and constant awareness of linguistic differences which might cause interference with learning must be foremost in a teacher's mind as he guides his students to read.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Major Findings

Since one of the major purposes in this paper was to identify those factors which can contribute to making the teacher of ESL reading more effective, my emphasis was on the identification and analysis of those factors. Extensive reading in the field of teaching ESL reading revealed a strong emphasis in the current literature on the psycholinguistic approach to reading. The essence of this approach is stress on the importance of a thorough understanding on the part of the teacher of the reading process which, among other things, entails an appreciation of the cultural and linguistic differences between the ESL student's native language and culture and the American language and culture. Among the authors whom I have consulted who espouse the psycholinguistic approach there is agreement that the ESL reading teacher must be aware of such differences and be able to use this knowledge as a basis for teaching. Thus, the methodologies the teacher employs to guide students to read are a natural outgrowth of the knowledge the teacher possesses of the students' cultural and linguistic background and needs.

Educational Implications

The findings of this study can be useful to teachers of ESL, to those who design ESL teacher-training programs, and to

those responsible for producing materials used in the ESL reading class.

First, there are implications for use by those who are responsible for training ESL teachers. At the present time most ESL teacher training programs do not include the study of reading, thus leaving a serious gap in the teacher's preparation for the ESL classroom. By using the information about the reading process with which the psycholinguists provide us, designers of such programs can provide future teachers with the appropriate knowledge needed to guide students to successful reading.

A course in the teaching of reading should be mandatory for all future ESL reading teachers. As well as learning to teach students to read, the reading teacher must be made aware of cultural and linguistic differences and to know what an integral part these differences play in the reading process. The contrastive study of the American language and culture and the students' native language and culture, as proposed by both Lado and Thonis, would provide the prospective educator with a glimpse of what his future students will have to contend with, thus enabling the teacher to enter the classroom with a clear understanding of reading interferences and their role in reading.

In addition to the two previously mentioned groups of people who would benefit from the findings in this paper, there are those who make ESL reading materials. The knowledge of what one does as one reads and the interferences which can

prevent a student from reading well should enable those creators of materials to produce effective materials; materials which incorporate and make implicit the emphasis of the cultural assumption of the target language, in our case English, as well as sufficient exercises wherein the students have an opportunity to learn about the English language and how it conveys the meaning of text.

Recommendations for Further Applications

The findings in this paper may be refined for different age and culture groups. Because of the current state of the art, the insights contained in this paper are general in nature, but with further study, they might be defined for specific culture groups, such as Hispanics, Indians, and Koreans and for age groups, such as children, teens, and adults. A third consideration for grouping might be the students' goals or reasons for studying ESL reading. Methodology and goals would differ from group to group, providing students with the means to approach the task of reading at their specific level of interest and need.

A second recommendation is the development of methods and materials that would apply the insights discussed within this paper. Much of the material used in the ESL classroom is based on approaches other than the psycholinguistic approach to reading, materials which lack adequate consideration for cultural and linguistic differences and background knowledge.

Finally, and possibly most important, is the need for a wider dissemination of the findings discussed in this paper to classroom practitioners and school administrators. Much of what the psycholinguistic approach to reading advocates remains within the writing of Smith, Goodman, Thonis, and others; little is seen by the teacher of ESL reading or educational administrators. In order for reading programs to be productive, the people who control the purchasing of materials and hire the teachers must be made aware of the factors which I have treated within this paper. No good will come of this information if the people who have direct contact with students are unaware of its existence.

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